

The Good CHRISTIAN's
HEAVEN upon EARTH:

CONTINUAL COMPANION,
CONSTANT FRIEND,
And
CORDIAL COMFORTER.

A DISCOURSE OF
CONSCIENCE,

Delivered in a SERMON at the
Cathedral Church of St. Peters in York,
on Wednesday the 26 of September, 1660.
being the Assize-week.

By R. H. M. A. and Rector of
Thornton in Craven.

*Nihil in hac vitâ securius, nihil jucundius,
Siderur Bonâ Conscientiâ, Premat Corpue, Trahat
mundus, Terreat Diabolus, illa tamen semper erit
cara. Bernard. lib. de Conscienc.*

LONDON,
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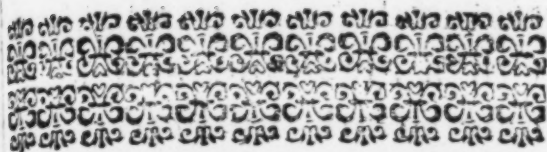
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To his Worthy and much Honored

P A T R O N,

WILLIAM LISTER Esq;

Grace and Peace of Conscience.

S I R,



Good Conscience creates a Paradise in the Soul, anticipates heaven, and is an Antipast of Immortality; it can, with *David*, sing songs in the night; with the three Children chant Hymns. in the midst of flames; with

A 3

Paul

The Epistle Dedicatory.

*S. Bern. lib.
de Consci-
entia.*

Paul and *Silas* praise God with a gladsome and light-some heart in Fetters and darkeſt Dungeons : And yet , though nothing dearer to the God of Heaven , nothing ſo rare upon the earth , as a good conſcience. Many ſearch after Science , few look after Conſcience , was the complaint of *St. Bernard* in his time ; what would the holy man have ſaid , had he ſeen our times , when conſcience hath been wholly abandon'd , all Laws , Divine and Humane , contemn'd , and all Duties to God and Man trampled under foot ; nay , all Powers , both Civil and Sacred , which by the
Au-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Authority of the Laws ;
might command and enforce these , overturned :
and (which is the wonder and the horror) those men .
who have done all this ,
pleasing not God , and walk- ^{1 Thess.}
ing contrary to all men , ^{2. 15.}
would be called and counted the onely godly men ,
those who have endeavoured to silence and suppress all .
Principles of Religion , Humanity , and Conscience ,
would seem to be most Religious , more then men ,
Saints , and the onely conscientious ? I speak not this
to reproach any , or to rake into the wounds of the Nation ;
but to move all to re-

A 4 pentance,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

penitance, and to magnifie
the mercy of our great and
and gracious Physitian, who
making our extremity his
opportunity, and not willing
his goodness should be out-
vied by our wickedness, hath
brought life out of death,
hope out of despair, order
out of *Anarchy* and confu-
sion, and not by power, but
by his own might, hath re-
stored those lawful Powers,
and powerful Laws again;
and so our consciences begin
to be awakened, and the
sense of our duties re-im-
pressed. This is the reason,
why being called to preach
in a very publick Assembly,
and in a time of publick bu-
siness,

The Epistle Dedicatory:

ness, I chose to speak of
Conscience; and in order to
the getting and keeping a
good Conscience, (among
others) of those Duties we
owe to his Sacred *Majesty* as
our Supreme, and to those
subordinate Powers, Eccle-
siastical and Civil, under him
established; and this I con-
ceive to be the reason also,
why I have been desired by
some that heard the Sermon,
and others that heard of it,
and desired to see it, to pub-
lish it unto the world, not
for any worth in the work
it self, or excellency in the
manner of handling, but for
the usefulness and reason-
ableness of the matter hand-
led;

The Epistle Dedicatory.

led ; since 'tis a good conscience that must teach us these necessary duties ; and the sincere performance of these duties is one , and that none of the least evidences of a good Conscience. The reason why I desired to publish it in your name , is, for that I held my self obliged to make publick an high expression you have made towards me (and, in me , towards the Church) of good conscience and great justice , which all that have heard of judge most worthy to be made exemplary , especially at this time, wherein so little conscience hath been made of doing right to the Church ;

The Epistle Dedicatory.

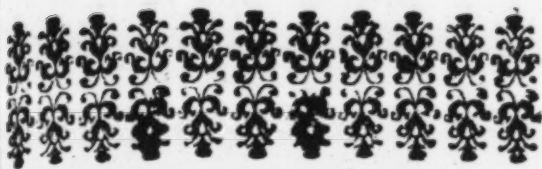
Church ; but such is your
humility and sincerity, that
you are so far from doing the
good you do to be known,
that you will not know your
self, much less suffer others
to know, the good you do,
you have commanded me
silence, and I must obey.
I shall onely say this against
your will, that I hereby in-
tend the best expression I
can make of gratitude to
a Patron, who hath de-
livered to me the charge of
that Flock I feed, not one-
ly with clean, but also with
bountiful hands, other Re-
turn I have none, you
desire none, but my daily,
humble, instant Prayers for
the continuance and en-
crease

The Epistle Dedicatory.
crease of all Spiritual and
Temporal Blessings upon
You and Yours; these shall
never be wanting from

(SIR)

*Your most obliged and ever
devoted, in the Service
of the Gospel,*

RICH. HOOKE.



The good Christian's
Heaven upon Earth, &c.

Act. 24. 16.

*And herein do I exercise my
self, to have always a Con-
science void of offence to-
wards God, and towards
men.*



H E R E are two things
which every Christi-
an ought to be most *2 things desirable*
careful to get, and most *to a Christian.*
chary to keep, a good
Conscience, and a good

Name; a good name is a precious ointment, *Eccles. 7.*
a good conscience is a continual feast: *1.*
Rich and happy is he, who is owner and *Prov. 13.*
possessor of both these Jewels; but this is.

B

is

*The Voice of a good
Conscience preferable
to a good name.*

is a happiness few men, yea, few good men, do enjoy. A good conscience every good man labours to have, but 'tis no new or strange thing for good men to suffer in their good name: Well, but if we cannot have both, which should we rather choose? The choice is easie, a good conscience; a good name, though good, is but a name, this can onely render us applauded of men; but a good conscience will render us approved of God. And what are we the better if all the world commend us, if our conscience condemn us? and what the worie, if traduced, disgraced, disparaged, by the envious and unjust censures of men, when there is an appeal to a gracious God and a good conscience? This was St. Paul's very case at this time, he was enviously and unjustly accused; this is St. Paul's very course at this time, he does indeed (as every man would and should do) vindicate his name and reputation: But his conscience is his greatest care, let come of his name what will, he will look to his conscience, this is his business, *Herein I exercise my self*— and 'tis a business that wholly takes him up, *always*— and in the first place he will take heed of offending God, however men may be offended, *to have a conscience void of offence towards God*— and yet he will not

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not justly or wilfully offend man neither,
and towards men. *Herein do I exercise my
self*—

The words are a part of St. Paul's Apology, in answer to the accusation of the chief Priests and Elders of the Jews, who having not eloquence answerable to their malice, do procure *Tertullus* an Orator vers. 1. to plead against him; in whose Oration, starch'd with flattery, and stuff'd with falshood, he charges *Paul* with three crimes, which, if true, he had more then deserved that censure, by the clamorous crue cast upon him, That it *was pity such* Act. 22. *a fellow should live upon the earth.* The 22. crimes he is accused of are Sedition, Heresie, and profanation of the Temple. He 3 crimes attributed *hears his Charge with patience, and will not answer it without license, which being granted, he speaks humbly, solidly, and punctually to every part of the Charge; for that of Sedition, he denies it, and puts them to their proofs, They neither found me in the Temple disputing* ver. 12, 13 *with any man, neither raising up the people— neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me* In answer to the charge of Heresie, he makes a plain confession of his Faith and Religion, which they unjustly branded with that name; *This I confess unto thee, that after* ver. 14, 15 *the way which they call Heresie, so wor-*

ship I the God of my fathers—— And for profanation of the Temple, so far was he from profaning it, that they found him purifi'd in it; *Certain Jews from Asia found me purifi'd in the Temple, neither with multitude nor with tumult.*

Obfer. 1. From this Context, and in our way to the Text, we may observe, 1 That God's dearest servants, and most faithful Ministers, have been most cruelly persecuted for their lives, and wrongfully censured in their cause and name. *St. Paul* is called and counted a pestilent fellow, seditious, a sectary, a profaner of the Temple.

Obfer. 2. 2. No persecution should cause us to be ashamed of our faith, or to deny the truth. The holy Apostle here gives an account, in the face of his enemies, of his faith and hope.

O'ser. 3. 3. 'Tis not enough to be sound in the faith, unless we be sanctifi'd in life: He gives an account of his life as well as of his faith; of his belief, in the words foregoing; of his practice, in the words of the Text, *Herein do I exercise my self, to have always a conscience void of offence, towards God and towards men.*

The words do represent unto us in the Apostle's practice, a holy and heavenly pattern for the ordering our Christian Conversation, wherein we may observe,

1 The

1 The great business of St. Paul's care,
To have a conscience void of offence.

2 His great care in this business, evidenced,

1. In his diligence and sedulity, ἐν τῷ
 ἔργῳ αὐτοῦ ἀσπῶ, *Herein do I exercise my
 self.*

2. In his perseverance and constancy,
 διαπαντός, *always.*

3. In his order and regularity, πρὸς τὸν
 θεόν καὶ τὰς ἀνθρώπους, *first, towards God;
 and then, towards man.*

The terms of the Text are plain, and
 the meaning obvious; This (saith St. Paul).
 I make my business, of this I am ever
 careful, to keep a good conscience, that
 I may not presumptuously offend God by
 sin, nor justly offend man by scandal.

The Text, like *David's Tree*, planted Psal. 1. 3.
by the Rivers of water, bears in every
 branch excellent fruit, and lays before us
 many holy and heavenly lessons: And
 first, it teacheth us,

That to lead a godly and a Christian life *Obfer. 1.*
 is no idle mans business, it is indeed, and
 ought to be, our whole business; 'tis
 enough to take up our whole time, our
 whole man; *Herein do I exercise my
 self.*

A man is, what he is in the whole *Obfer. 2.*
 course and tenor of his life. We are not
 to judge our selves, or others, by particu-

lar acts ; one act of sin argues not a nullity, one act of piety argues not a reallity of sanctification. That we are what we always are ; *always*—

Obfer. 3. A good man prefers his conscience before his credit, his profit, or any other Interest : *a conscience*—

Obfer. 4. A good Christian makes it his first and chiefest care not to offend God , to approve his heart and ways unto God : *towards God*—

Obfer. 5. As we ought to walk holily, so as not to offend God ; so ought we to walk righteously , so as not to offend our neighbour. The moral man is all for the second Table, but the first he little regards ; the hypocrite pretends much for the first Table , neglecting the second ; but a good Christian hath a due regard to both , as he would live godly , so also righteously : not that he can walk so closely with God as never to offend , but he will not wilfully offend ; not that he can so demean himself towards men but they may take offence, but he will give none.

These points I onely name , and leave to be enlarged in your own meditations. That which I shall treat on is , the result of the words joyntly, 'tis this :

Def. It is the duty , and ought to be the endeavour of every Christian , to get and to keep a good conscience, towards God and towards men.

In

In the prosecution and explication of this Doctrine, there are four things necessary to be opened: 1 What conscience is. 2 What a good conscience is. 3 What are the means to get, and to keep a good conscience, towards God and man. 4 How we may know and be assured, that with the wise Merchant we have found and gained this Pearl of price, a good conscience.

And first of the first, What conscience is; and to begin with the *quid nominis*, ^{What} the name and notation of the word. The ^{Consci-}ence is. *Hebrews* have no name that doth properly answer to the word conscience, they express it by the general terms of Heart, Soul, Spirit.

The *Greek συνιδναι*, and so our *English*, Conscience, signifies seeing or knowing together.

Two reasons there are assigned for the name; 1 Because 'tis joyned with Science, the conscience knowing a thing together with its principle, which principle is usually called *συντηρησις*. ^{Knowledge of y^r conscience.}

2. Because it is a joynt-knowledge; another knowing what we know, which another is God, who is an ocular witness of all our actions, as the wise man teacheth us, *The ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.* ^{Prov. 5. 21.} And let us by the way (that we

may not be thought unfruitfully to have touch'd upon the notion and origination of the word) take this Observation or Meditation with us, and O that it were always in our minds, *That God, together with us, knows all we do.*

God's omniscience acquainted with all our actions.

Did we consider this, it would make us vigilant over our hearts, and careful of all our ways, knowing, that it is not onely impiety, but impudency to commit any sin, since no sin can be committed, but in the eye, and before the face, of the all-seeing and all-holy God: I know no bridle more powerful to curb and keep us in, and restrain us from sin, then this consideration, That all things are visible to God, who alone is invisible. A child dares not offend in the eye of his father, a servant in the face of his Master, a wife dares not be unchast in the presence of her husband. O that we would always remember, that where-ever we are, whatsoever we do, we are ever under God's eye, who is all these unto us, a Father, a

Mal. 1. 6. Master, a Husband. This for the name.

The nature of conscience.

2. For the *quid rei*, the nature of conscience, it is the soul's Mirror or Looking-glass, wherein it views it self and all its actions; the soul's Register, which sits like *David's* ready writer, with pen in hand, and records all our speeches, actions, thoughts and desires; it is God's

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Bayliff, which arrests us upon every trespass and breach of his Laws; it is God's Sentinel, that stands upon the watch-tower of the soul, and discovers all that pass. *Socrates, Empedocles*, and others, tell us, that every man hath a good or a bad Genius, who is his continual comptroller and assistant, and that he is no one moment from us, but doth always accompany us, from our first coming into the world, till our last gasp: The Conscience is truly and indeed this Genius.

*The Genius of
Socrates and
Empedocles.*

But, to speak properly, Conscience is that faculty of the rational soul, which taketh knowledge of, and giveth judgment upon, all our actions.

I shall not here enter into a Scholastical discourse of conscience, nor trouble you with the distinction of the acts of conscience, Prospective, Reflexive, Remorative, which will be to amuse you, not to instruct you. While I descend to the unlearned, I will presume upon the pardon of the learned. The nature of conscience is better felt than understood, experienced then expressed. (Beloved)

*Mallet ut
me repre-
benderet
Gramma-
tici quàm
ut non in-
telligant
indocili.*

When you are running into the by-path of sin, do you not hear a voice behind you, checking you, and saying, This is not the way? this is conscience. When you have committed a sin, which no eye of man could see, no mortal could witness against;

against; do you not sometimes feel something that gripes and grinds, pains and stings you within? that is conscience. When you have been reproached, reviled, had that laid to your charge you never did; have you not found something within to support and comfort you? that is conscience.

3 principal
acts of conscience

Operari sequitur esse, our working declares our being. There are three principal acts of conscience, to which all the rest may be reduced, and by these three the nature of it is fully declared; it is *Testis, Dux, Judex*.

A Witness testifying what we have done, or not done.

A Guide, directing what we should do, or not do.

A Judge, absolving, if we do well; condemning, if we do amiss.

Conscience is a
Witness.

Rom. 9. 1

1. As a Witness, it testifies what we have done, or not done; it takes cognizance of all that is in the mind, the heart, and soul. *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness.*

And 'tis a very faithful and impartial witness, it will speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; and 'tis a very tenacious witness too, it could readily round the brethren of *Joseph* in the ear, and tell them of their unnatural treachery, and unbrotherly cruelty, acted against *Joseph* twenty years before. Hast thou

Gen. 42.
21.

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thou been, or art thou an oppressor, a drunkard, an adulterer, a swearer, a Sabbath-breaker; conscience knows it, sees it, will not conceal it, or dissemble it, but sooner or later it will tell thee thine own truly and barely. We may say of conscience as the woman of *Tekoah* to *David*, It is wise, according to the wisdom of an Angel of the Lord, to know all things. We cannot turn to the right hand, nor to the left, without its knowledge. By the understanding we know a thing, by conscience we know that we do know it; by the will we desire, by conscience we know we desire; by the heart we believe, by conscience we know that we believe. *I have sinned against the Lord*, saith *David*, 'twas conscience told him so; *I have had my conversation upright*, saith *St. Paul*, 'twas conscience that told him so. Conscience is truly what the Poet speaks in fancy, the *Argus* of the soul, it hath a hundred eyes, ever watching, every way turning, and always testifying and giving witness and evidence to all we do.

2 Sam. 14.
19, 20.

2. As a Guide, it directs us what we should do, or not do. There are remainders of the Law of Nature, principles of Honesty, Justice, Religion imprinted in every man's heart. *St. Paul* tells us, that the *Gentiles* which had not the written Law,

A Guide.

Rom. 2. Law, had the Law written in their hearts
14, 15. and consciences. There are some notions

*Decata Na-
tura.*

*Directory of
Conscience.*

in man fallen, that God ought to be served, that we should do as we would be done unto — Conscience is the Treasurer, the Repository, that lays up and brings forth these principles and rules for our direction in our lives and actions. As for example, concerning a duty to be done, suppose Prayer, the Synteropsis or principle of conscience is, God ought to be worshipped, the mind subsumes, prayer is an act of God's worship; hence conscience concludes, it is our duty to pray. So concerning a sin to be avoided, suppose Adultery, the natural principal is, All filthiness and dishonesty is to be avoided, the mind assumes adultery is filthy and dishonest, the conscience concludes, adultery is to be avoided. Thus, even the natural conscience directs, but the natural conscience, by the onely light of natural principles, is but a bad, a blind guide.

*the imperfectis
of natural light
alone.*

Rom. 1.
20.

The Apostle sets up the pillars of natural reason, when he tells us, that it can onely leave us without excuse. Natural light (though cri'd up by some blind and miserably misled Fanaticks, as the onely inward Teacher) is little better then darkness: Wherefore the Lord hath graciously super-added to us Christians the light of his holy Word and blessed Spirit; the

the conscience keeping to the one, and ^{Pfal. 119.} having the assistance of the other, is a perfect guide. Thus conscience directs, and ^{105.} it directs with an enforcement; if it be a ^{Joh. 16.} sin, it forbids it with a check or remur- ^{13.} muration; if a duty, it stirs us up to it with an instigation; as the Rider not only shews the Horse the way, but hath a Spur to quicken him if he be dull, and a Bridle to curb him if he be head-strong.

3. As a Judge, it approves, absolves, if ^{A Judge.} we do well; accuses and condemns, if we do amiss.

1. It approves, absolves, if we do well: *This is our rejoycing, the testimony* ^{2 Cor. 1.} *of our conscience, that in simplicity and* ^{12.} *godly sincerity — we have had our conversation in this world.* Here is consciences approbation. *Whose Ox or Ass have I* ^{1 Sam. 12.} *taken? whom have I defrauded? whom* ^{3.} *have I oppressed?* Here is consciences absolution, when we walk uprightly, approve our hearts and ways unto God: conscience allows, approves us, and if we be traduced, it absolves us, gives us the white-stone; nay it not onely acquits us of sins not committed, but of sins committed, if repented; and hence arises peace and joy, serenity, and sweet tranquillity.

2. It accuses and condemns, if we do amiss. *Adam, before he had sinned,*
was

Gen. 3. was not afraid of God's presence, nor ashamed of his nakedness; but having by sin brought a guilt upon his conscience, he fears, shames, flies, hides, though with as much folly as faultiness. *Achitophel*, after he had been false and unfaithful to his Lord King *David*, out of the guilt of his conscience becomes his own Executioner. *Judas* (of whom *Achitophel* was too true a Type; that complaint of *David*, *Psal. 41. 9.* being as well Prophe- tical as Historical, looking forward to *Judas* his treachery, as well as backward to *Achitophel's* treason) I say, *Judas*, after he had betrayed his Lord and Master *Christ*, out of the hell of his conscience became his own Judge, Witness, Accu- ser, Executioner. St. *Augustine* notably sets forth the hell and horror of a con- demning conscience, *fugit ab agro in civitatem*; He flies (saith he) from the field into the city, from the city to his house, from the open rooms of his house to his closet, from his closet to the *interius cubiculum*, his innermost closet, his conscience; *Et ecce hostem suum invenit quo confugerat, seipsum quo fugiturus est?* and behold he finds his enemy, when he flies from him, himself & his own guilty con- science is his enemy, and how or whither can he fly from himself? *Josephus* relates a strange piece of justice, done by the Em-

**2 Sam.
17. 23.**

**Enarr. in
Psal. 45.**

**Joseph.
Antiq.
Jud. l. 18.
p. 643.**

peror

peror *Caius* upon his Deputy *Petronius*, having offended him; he commands him to erect a Tribunal, to read his own Indictment, and with his own mouth to pronounce Sentence upon himself. Such a Judge have we every one nigh us, within us; conscience keeps a privy Sessions in the soul, erects a Tribunal, condemns us when ever we do amiss; when we do evil, or when we do a good duty and not well, but formally. Conscience charges us with it, lays it in our dish; Thou hast prayed, but not with a heavenly mind; thou hast heard, but not with an humble and teachable heart. And as conscience absolving brings peace and joy, so conscience accusing posses with fear, sorrow, sadness, yea, desperation.

These are the chief acts of conscience; by these you may see what it is, and why God hath placed it in the soul, that we may know what we do, that we may be guided to that which is good, that we may have a censurer in our own hearts to acquit or condemn us when we do good or evil. We are dull, dead, stupid, very forgetful of God, of our souls, of good duties; we are too prone and apt to flie out into evil. God therefore out of his grace hath given us this Monitor, this Remembrancer, to be with us, within us. The Nightingale, they say, places a thorn in

in her nest, upon which falling when she is drowsie, the thorn pricking her doth rouse her, and make her sing more chearfully : In like manner our souls, being drowsie and heavy, sensual and secure, the Lord hath placed this thorn in our bosome, Conscience, to prick, awake, and quicken us to our duty. We have seen what conscience is, see we in the next place what

2 Point,
What a
good con-
science is.

1 Tit. 15.

The Hu-
man Na-
ture of
Christ is
here ex-
cepted.

2. A good conscience is. Here two things must be premised, 1 There is no such thing as a good conscience, naturally good. Our nature, as created, was good, but, as depraved, is naught. St. Paul tells us, the mind and conscience of the natural man, the unbeliever, is defiled.

2 And consequently there is no such thing as a good conscience legally and absolutely good, according to the terms and tenor of the Law; that hath no stain of sin, no mixture of error, no dregs of ignorance; such a conscience was never out of Paradise, or below Heaven. Thus was man created indeed, in an universal rectitude of all his faculties; but since the fall, we never recovered this perfection; as the mind is enlightned but in part, the will renewed but in part, so the conscience is purifi'd but in part.

When therefore I speak of a good conscience; I mean thereby a conscience
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good Evangelically, according to the terms and tenor of the Gospel; a conscience renewed by the grace of Regeneration, and purged from dead works. And that we may not mistake, we will take St. Paul's own description; *The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.* Behold, a good conscience is placed in the midst between a pure heart, and an unfeigned faith; there then is a good conscience, where there is unfeigned faith in Christ; and a heart purified and sanctified by the holy Ghost. We shall understand more fully what a good conscience is, when we have made enquiry into the next Point.

1 Tim. i.
5.

concomitant of
a good conscience.

3. What are the means to get and to keep a good conscience toward God and man; and first, towards God.

3 Point.
The way
to get a
good con-
science
toward
God and
man.

There are five Ingredients requisite to the constitution of a good conscience towards God, Knowledge, Faith, Repentance, Sincerity, Obedience.

5 requisites
in a good
conscience toward

1. The first requisite is a saving and sanctified Knowledge of God's will, and our duty; this the very name and notion of conscience implies, science, or knowledge. *Whatsoever is not of faith is sin*, Rom. 14. Faith the Apostle. Faith is not there opposed to unbelief, but to doubting and ignorance, and is put for knowledge; if conscience err, nay, but doubt, what-ever

23.

the danger of an erroneous and misinformed conscience we do is sin ; if it be not our duty , and we do it , we sin because we do not our duty ; if it be our duty , and we do it , we sin too , because we do it doubtfully. To extricate our selves out of this perplexity, the onely way is, *deponere erroneam conscientiam* , to lay aside an erroneous conscience , and this is , by rightly informing it. Conscience is the soul's Pilot , and therefore it must be acquainted with the Card and Compass , else the Ship is in ill case. Conscience is (as we have heard) the soul's guide, therefore it must have eyes in its head , for if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch. What work , what havock did *Paul* make , while *Saul* ? How many in an ignorant and misguided zeal think they do God good service , while they would , if they had their will , rase the Service , the Worship , the Ordinances of God to the ground ? No heat more dangerous then that of zeal , if it want light ; 'tis like fire out of the chimney , 'twill burn all before it. Wouldst thou have a good conscience ? labour for a conscience illuminated , and rightly informed by the Word of God.

Conscience grounded on fact.

2. Labour for a lively Faith : a good conscience (as I have said) is such not Legally , according to the tenour of the Law , but Evangelically , according to the tenour of the Gospel. Now faith is the great Gospel-

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Gospel-grace; and St. *Paul* joyns faith ^{1 Tim. 1.}
and a good conscience three times to- ^{5, 19. and}
gether in one Epistle. Conscience can- ^{chap. 3.9.}
not be good, so long as it lies under guilt;
no good conscience til we have peace with
God, no peace with God till we have inter-
est in Christ, no interest in Christ but by
faith; 'tis faith that lays hold on th' merit of
his death, and draws vertue from his blood;
and Christ's blood hath a pardoning and a
purging, a curing and a cleansing, a sancti-
fying and a saving vertue; it will both
pacifie and purifie the conscience, accord-
ing to that of the Apostle, *The blood of* ^{Heb. 9. 14}
Christ shall purge your conscience from
dead works, to serve the living God.

3. Repentance is the next, and 'tis as ^{Repentance &c.}
necessary as any of the rest, for obtaining ^{3 requisite to a}
a good conscience, which cannot consist ^{good conscience.}
with bad courses, and sinful practises. Sin
wounds the conscience, slays the soul.
There is no peace, faith God, unto the ^{Esa. 57. 21}
wicked: No peace with God, no peace
with man, no peace with their own con-
science. Wicked men may have ease and
security, but not peace and tranquillity;
they may, with *Nabal*, live graceless, and
be senseless; God may punish their as-
sisted security in their life, with an in-
sted security at their death; but no true
solid peace can any have, who lives
and lies in any sin. This *David* witnesseth,

Psal. 38.3. when he confesseth, *There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger, there is no rest in my bones because of my sin.* Sin offends God, it onely offends him; and though he be so gracious as to be reconciled to sinners, yet to sin he will never be reconciled, nor yet to sinners neither, but upon the condition of true and timely repentance.

*A concomitant of a
good conscience
Sincerity.*

2 Cor. 1.
11.

4. Since God, who hates all sin, above all sins hates hypocrisie: If therefore we would have a good conscience, we must labour for sincerity: *This is our rejoycing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in this world.* God is a God of pure eyes, and loves a pure heart; and every where commands, commends, requires, accepts sincerity: And indeed our uprightness of heart is all the perfection we can in this life attain; and if our hearts be perfect towards God, the imperfections of our weak, but sincere obedience, shall find pardon with God, and will be cover'd by the perfection of Christ's obedience. How foully, how fearfully, how frequently did David fall; yet, his heart being upright, he is called, *A man after God's own heart.* The godly King's of *Israel* were not without their failings; but they

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they are distinguished from the ungodly, by this very character of their sincerity. *How canst thou say, I love thee, when thy heart is not with me?* could that Harlot say to Sampson. Vice is doubly vitious in Vertue's dress. Sincerity is absolutely necessary to the constitution of of a good conscience.

5. To these, let us add Obedience, and ⁵ *concomitant.* we have all its Ingredients; and added it *obedience.* must be, else without obedience, Knowledge is a fruitless speculation, Faith is a groundless presumption, Repentance is not performed but personated, and our pretended Sincerity will vanish into hypocrisy. Obedience is our best sacrifice unto God; nay, obedience is better than sacrifice. There are that will not endure to hear of the Law, under the Gospel; but our blessed Saviour, and after him his beloved Disciple St. John, makes it the mark of our love to God, to *keep his commandments.* We are indeed through Christ freed from the Law, as the condition of the Covenant of works, but as it is a rule of holy life we are bound unto it, shall never be freed from it, no, not in heaven, for then, and not till then, shall we perfectly keep it, perfectly loving God and our neighbour: 'tis a branch, and the very first branch, of the Covenant of grace; to have the Law written in our hearts.

1 King.
15 14.

1 Sam. 15.
22.

Joh. 14 25
1 Joh. 5. 3

*the everlasting
law of the Gospel*

Heb. 8. 10

hearts. 'Tis our prayer, *Thy will be done on earth, as in heaven.* 'Twas our first undoing, that our first Parents did their own will, and left God's will undone. No man can have a good conscience towards God, who is conscious to himself of living in any willing or wilful disobedience to any one of God's commandments. Sin is the transgression of the Law, and guilt follows sin at the heels, and conscience can never be good, so long as it lies under sin and guilt. Wherefore though when we have done our best, we are but unprofitable servants; yet till we have done our best, we can never be accounted faithful and dutiful servants to our gracious Master. These are the means to get a good conscience towards God.

*Good conscience
towards men.*

2. The way to get a good conscience towards Man, is, as St. Paul directeth, *Rom. 13.7 To give every man his due.* There is a due to Superiors, a due to Equals, a due to Inferiors.

in 3 respects.

The Superiors due is Obedience, Subjection: *Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not onely for wrath, but also for conscience sake.* And our Superiors are either supreme, or Subordinate; 'tis St. Peter's own distinction, *Submit your selves — whether it be unto the King as Supreme, or unto Governors, as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil-doers,* and

*1 Pet. 2.
13, 14.*

and for the praise of them that do well.

The King then being Supreme, we must obey as Supreme; he is *solo Deo mi-* ^{Obedience & Duty towards King.}
nor, by God, and next under God, placed over us, and next unto God we owe him obedience, and very often are our duties to God and the King joyned: *Solomon* joynes them, *My son, fear thou the Lord* Prov. 24.
and the King; our Saviour joyns them, 21.
Give unto Caesar the things that are Ca- Mar. 12.
sar's, and unto God the things that are 17.
God's: St. Peter joyns them, *Fear God,* 1 Pet. 2.
honor the King; he cannot fear God who 17.
 doth not honor the King, he cannot be a good Christian who is not a good Subject; and Protestants have ever been the best, both Christians and Subjects. I shall not reflect upon our late carriage, I hope, as it hath been our suffering and our sin, so our sorrow and repentance, that we have had *other Lords to have dominion over us*. O that we could turn to God by hearty repentance, that we would turn to our King by hearty loyalty, that we would return to one another by hearty love and reconciliation; so should we be happy in three Acts of Oblivion at once, God's, his Majesty's, and our Own.

Let us praise God with a cheerful conjunction of hearts, and holy affections, that he hath in honor, and peace, and by a miracle of mercy to him and us, restored

our *David*, his Anointed, the breath of
 Lam. 4 20 our nostrils, and set him upon the Throne
 of his fathers; hath kept his fear in his
 Royal heart, and by the sovereign Anti-
 dote of his saving grace, hath preserved
 him from infection in that pestilent aire,
 where he hath been enforced long to
 breathe; for that he hath given us hope,
 who were lately at the brink of despair,
 That by his Majesty's happy Restitution,
 our Church and State may obtain a happy,
 just, and orderly settlement and reforma-
 tion. And let us who are Ministers
 preach, and all both Ministers and Chri-
 stians practise, a willing, Christian, and
 cheerful obedience to his Majesty's go-
 vernment, never upon any the most Re-
 ligious pretence to resist him, or to en-
 deavour to make difference betwixt him
 and his great Council. Let us lift up our
 voices like Trumpets, to shew our people
 their transgressions, but never blow the
 Trumpet of sedition. Let it be onely de-
 fended by *Jesuites*, that Princes for Ty-
 ranny or Heresie may be deposed and
 murdered; for us, let us learn from a
 better school, that against a King there
 is no rising up; that none can stretch forth
 his hand against the Lord's Anointed,
 and be guiltless; that who so resists, shall
 receive to themselves damnation. Con-
 sonant to this Doctrine of the Scriptures

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Prov. 30.
 3.
 1 Sam.
 26. 9.
 Rom. 13. 2

was the doctrine and practise of the primitive Christians: None of us, saith St. Cyprian, doth resist, when apprehended, nor endeavour revenge against your unjust violence, although our people be numerous, and our power more then enough: And why? *Deus est vindex*, God is the revenger of his injur'd servants. 'Tis a most noble passage, and memorable example to this purpose, that in the Ecclesiastical Story of the *Theban Legion*, being seven thousand in number, all Christians, in the Army of *Maximilian* the Heathen Emperor; he commands the Army to offer sacrifice to the Heathen gods. They refuse, but dare not resist; and to decline the Emperor's discontent remove their quarters. He renews his command; they humbly deny, telling him, They dare not, to obey him, disobey God, for whose sake they had been, and ever would be, his faithful servants. The Emperor puts them to a decimation. They submit with cheerfulness, praying for their murderers. He lays his commands again upon the remainder to sacrifice. They follow the heroick example of their fellows, and humbly refuse. Whereupon they are all butcher'd without the least resistance: Their Commander *Mauritius* could not contain his joy for their constancy in the faith, and patience under persecution;

Ep. ad De-
metrianum

Quamvis
nimius &
copiosus sit
noster po-
pulus.

Remarkable
Example of a
Christian obedience
to higher powers
in
the Theban
Legion.

persecution ; How fearful was I, saith he, (since armed men may easily be tempted to defend themselves) lest under colour of self-preservation, in so just a cause, they should have resisted. I was watchful, and had Christ's example in readiness, who commanded his Disciple to put up his sword into his scabbard; and I told them, if you use not your weapons, I have God's own warrant for your safety. Here were truly Christian Soldiers, a high precedent to all Soldiers and Christians, to teach them to suffer and submit, but never to resist. No, Kings must be obeyed either actively or passively, but never resisted. Christians did cheerfully submit their necks unto, but never dared to lift up their hands against their persecutors; they durst not oppose Heathen Emperors, let not us oppose Christian Kings; they durst not resist the persecutors of the faith, let not us then resist the Defenders of the faith. Hear *Tertullian* in the name of the whole Church, With hands spread abroad, because innocent; and bare-headed, because not ashamed, we are always praying for all Emperors, that God would grant them a long Life, a happy Reign, a safe House, victorious Armies, a faithful Counsel, a loyal People, and a peaceable world. If we would have a good conscience, we must, and that for conscience sake

*Protestants doe
give of obedience
to kings & Magis-
trates.*

fake, obey the King as Supreme.

2. We must obey them that are over us under the King, subordinate Magistrates and Governors; and those are

Civil,

Ecclesiastical.

For Civil Governors, no doubt but such we have, and to such we owe obedience, (as Judges and other Magistrates.) But for Ecclesiastical Superiors, Church-governors, there is not so good agreement; some are for one sort, some for another, and some for none at all.

But that there are such, who they are, and that to them Obedience is due, I shall briefly and plainly shew.

Obedience to
Ecclesiastical
persons due.

That there are such, and that obedience is due unto them, desiring to give weight rather than number, I shall make use but of one place of Scripture to evince it, and 'tis so clear, that it is not capable of an evasion; *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls.* Be-

Heb. 13.
17.

hold, here are Rulers, spiritual Rulers, that watch for our souls, and we must obey them, and submit unto them. But then, the next is a nice point, who they are, and what kind of government Christ hath set up for the ruling and ordering his Church. For me, I have never been afraid or ashamed, when called to it, to speak my thoughts,

*the Church
government*

* 'Tis the
very ex-
pression of
Dr. Ham-
mond, in
his Pre-
face to
*The Power
of the
Keys*. See
it by and
by ex-
plained.

thoughts, and what if I say, they are the thoughts of the most pious and sober, both Ministers and Christians in this Church; my judgment is and hath been, * A moderate and well-grounded Episcopacy, with a standing assistant Presbytery, is the most excellent and best regulated form of Church-government, most agreeable with God's Word, most conducive to God's glory, and the Churches order and unity, the least liable to just exception, and the most likely to give all sober, judicious, and good men satisfaction. This I conceive to be the Apostolical frame by them set up and settled, and since them to this day in the Church continued. This Regiment excellently provides, that neither one with *Diotrophes* may exalt himself, and have the Onely preheminnence; nor yet the rest of the sons of *Levi* may mutiny against *Moses* and *Aaron*, as if they took too much upon them.

Here (speaking of the care a Christian should take not to offend) I would not willingly offend any, by this plain declaration of my judgment and opinion; and yet perhaps I may offend both the Presbyterians, and those of the severer sort of Episcopal persons too; the Presbyterians, for that I declare for Episcopacy; the severe Episcopal persons, for that I declare for a moderate and well-regulated Episcopacy.

To

To these my Apology shall be first, and shall be short; When I speak of a standing By a Presbytery, assistant to Episcopacy, I speak standing the very words of the reverend Doctor Presbytery Hammond, a great and known assertor of ry he did Episcopacy, and in a time when scarce doubtless, any but himself did, or durst publicly and I do assert that Government. And when I mean, a say, A moderate Episcopacy, I speak from Prebendary, or the words of a greater Doctor than he, the Dean and Chapter. the Doctor of the Gentiles, *Let your moderation be known unto all men*; Surely it Phil. 4. 5. becomes not God's Ministers to rule with *Moderation in Church Govern-* rigour, and to teach men, as *Gideon* taught ment commendable. the men of *Succoth*, with briers and thorns. A well regulated government, bounded with Rules and Canons, will be, as to the satisfaction of the Church, so to the safety of the Bishops, who shall be able to give a good account to God and man, and to their own consciences, for their Ecclesiastical administrations, and all acts of Episcopal jurisdiction.

And for those of the Presbyterial judgment, I hope I shall not offend them, if I onely speak the words of those in defence of Episcopacy, who have been the greatest Patrons and Promoters of Presbytery; and let them see, that the most zealous of them, when they speak out of heat, and in the words of sobriety, speak honorably of Bishops, and acknowledge Episcopacy

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Episcopacy to be agreeable to the Scriptures: I shall mention those onely, who are the *Antesignani* of the Presbyterial government, Mr. Calvin, Mr. Beza, and the Church of Scotland; and when you have heard them speak, you will say, that if they had been see'd of the other part, they could not speak more fairly, nay, more fully for Episcopacy.

*Calv. Ep.
ad Regem.
Poloniae.*

*Institut.
l. 4. c. 4.
s. 4.*

Calvin writing to the King of Polonia, propounds the government of that Church by an Arch-bishop, and Provincial or City-Bishops, which he calls a Moderate Honor; his words you may see, *Si hodie illustrissimo Polonia Regno unus praesset Archiepiscopus — essent deinde vel Provinciales vel Urbani Episcopi qui peculiariter ordini conservando intenti forent* — Again, (saith he) antiently every Province had among their Bishops one Arch-bishop, and above the Arch-bishop the *Nicen* Council ordained Patriarchs for the preserving of Discipline: The government thus ordered, they called an Hierarchy, which name he dislikes: But, saith he, *Si rem intuemur*, if we look into the thing it self, we shall find, that the old Bishops meant to forge no form of ruling the Church, differing from that which the Lord appointed in his Word. The same Calvin writes most reverently to our *English* Bishops, giving them al-

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ways their Episcopal Titles, as in many of his Epistles is to be seen. I could instance in many more passages of his to this purpose, (if it would not swell a Sermon too much) but these may suffice to let us see, that Mr. *Calvin* was not in his heart so great an adversary to Episcopacy, as some of his brethren believe him.

Beza, the most violent against Bishops, In his Disputations yet himself speaks as much for them ^{put. with} as can be desired; hear him once for all, ^{Saravia,} *Quod si nunc, &c.* If now the reformed ^{ch. 18. p.} Churches of *England*, being under-^{270.} propped with the Authority of Bishops and Arch-bishops, do continue, as this hath happened to that Church, in our memory, that she hath had men of that Calling, not onely most notable Martyrs of God, but also excellent Pastors and Doctors: Let them truly enjoy that singular blessing of God, which I wish may be perpetual unto her. You see *Calvin* hath said a little for Episcopacy, but *Beza* much more; indeed what more can be said?

Hear we now the Church of *Scotland*; before Presbytery was establish'd there, ^{Superintendants} they set up Superintendents, whose Stipend they make larger, and power greater ^{in Scotland.} than ordinary Ministers. This is one of ^{1 Book of} their Canons, ^{Discipline} *It is concluded by the whole Ministry assembled, that all Ministers* ^{pag. 37.} *should*

should be subject to their Super-intendents.
 2 P. Acts Again, We have thought it a most expedi-
 of the Ge- ent thing at this time, that from the whole
 neral As- number of godly men, now presently in the
 sembly. Realm, be selected ten or twelve (for in so
 many Provinces we have divided the
 whole) to whom charge and commande-
 ment shall be given to plant and erect
 Kirks, to set, order, and appoint Mini-
 sters — And then follows the names of
 the places of Residence, and several
 Diocesses ('tis their own word) of the Su-
 per-intendents. We see the Church of
 Scotland it self, the fastest friend to Pres-
 bytery, doth not yet believe it, *jure di-*
 vino; else with what conscience could it
 set up and judge, for that time most con-
 venient, the government of Bishops or
 Super-intendents?

And Zan-
 chy tells
 us, That
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 tendent is
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 worse La-
 tine word
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 better
 Greek
 word *Epis-*
copus.

I have chosen to speak here of this
 onely head of consideration, waving all
 the other Arguments from Scripture and
 Antiquity, because this I conceive most
 convictive, least offensive, because it takes
 off that so much magnifi'd assertion of
 some, That the best Reformed Churches
 are Presbyterian; it being most clear, that
 even those they call the best reformed
 Churches do speak well and worthily of
 Episcopacy; some practise it, others wish
 it all approve it, because it shews, that
 the greatest friends of Presbytery, when
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they will speak their thoughts, speak for Episcopacy, and therefore it can be no shame to our Brethren to follow their example, and to esteem it the greatest folly to be wedded to error, the greatest victory to yield to truth; and that they shall not Apostatize or abandon their best friends, but may keep *Calvin*, *Beza*, yea, the Church of *Scotland* it self, and yet submit to Episcopacy. I have not taken up this opinion yesterday, turning with the time and stream; it hath been always my judgment, and I must say, I have been much confirmed in it by the Presbyterians, some of that judgment being my neighbours and acquaintances, whom I saw greatly devoted to, and heard highly speaking for the Presbyterian government: I procured, and, with the best judgment I could, perused their Books asserting that Government; and all that I have time now to say, is what I have even now said, The Arguments and Books for the Presbyterian have much confirmed my judgment for the Episcopal government; and I wish those who have taken things upon trust, would read their own Books without affection, and the Writings for Episcopacy without prejudice; I am confident they would not think so well of their own Discipline, to be so much in love with it, nor so ill of

Episcopacy, but that they might submit unto it. Thus I have plainly and sincerely laid open my thoughts, as to the government of the Church, and, as I judge, have not therein gone altray from my Text: And however I may be cenured, I judged it more beſeeming in direct and downright terms to declare my conscience, as to this point, rather then obliquely to lash and gird, as in such cases I have observed too many to do, which if it shew a little wit, it shews but a little gravity, and is, as I conceive, very unsutable to so sacred a Work, and not in the least serviceable to any Cause.

*Exhortation to
an agreement of
both parties Episcop.
and Presb.*

I will close this point with an humble supplication to all, both of the one and the other judgment, and that in the Name of Him who is the Great Bishop and High-priest of the Church, and as they desire the peace and happy settlement of the Church, that they will both consider, reflect, and remember, what, not many years, yea, months ago, when not onely Government, but Ministry, Religion, and even Christianity it self, lay upon the Block; when we feared our Church would be unchurched, and the Candlestick removed: What, then all of us would have yielded, from what receded, how far Episcopacy would have stooped to Presbytery, how far Presbytery would have sub-

mitted

mitted to Episcopacy. Let us not then, now God hath confuted our fears, and turned them into more then hopes, return to our former temper, or rather distemper. Let us follow the example, as good as great, of our gracious Sovereign, who professeth (and hath proved) to have the same heart in *England* he had at *Breda*. O let us perform what our hearts have promised in our trouble; let us not prefer our humor before our happiness, nay, before God's glory and the Church's peace.

I have spoken of our duties to our Superiors, (the means to get a good conscience) there are duties also to Equals *Duties to equals, & inferiours.* and Inferiors, and they are many, and the time nigh spent, I shall therefore sum them all up in that one golden Rule of our blessed Saviour, which will stand in stead of many, and is indeed comprehensive of all: *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them, 12.* *Matth. 7.* for this is the Law and the Prophets. The Text also would give me warrant, if the time would give me leave to speak something of things indifferent; concerning which, many not well understanding, and as many not rightly using their Christian liberty, have given offence to the consciences of their brethren. But I must refer you to the Apostle, who hath left us large directions in this particular, having *vid. Rom.*

M. In his Sermons upon Rom. 14. 3. and 23. and upon 1 Pet. 2.

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good direction
about things in
different
Dr. Sanderson's
Sermon on
Christian
Liberty
out of
1 Pet. 2.
16.

4th. General
Point, The
marks or
evidences
of a good
conscience.

Lib. de
consc. p.
1107.

spent divers Chapters on this subject, and to the Reverend Doctor *Sanderson*, who is herein the Apostle's best Expofitor; I have time onely to commend unto you that excellent Aphorism of his, which, if rightly applyed and understood, would almost alone reconcile all our differences about things indifferent: *'Tis superstition to forbid that as sinful which is but indifferent, and therefore lawful, as well as superstition to enjoyn that as necessary which is indifferent, and therefore Arbitrary.*

These are the means to get, (*Et quibus nascimur iis enutrimur*) these are the means to keep a good conscience, both towards God and towards men.

There remains but one point more, (since, as we have heard, a good conscience is a continual feast) how we may know and be assured whether we have this good cheer at home, a good conscience.

What hath been already said in the description of a good conscience, and in the directions how to get a good conscience, if observed and applyed, would be a lively glass to let us see the face and complection of our conscience. I shall therefore shortly dispatch this point, taking *St. Bernard* as my Guide, who tells us of a four-fold state of the conscience, there is *Bona & tranquilla*, *Mala & tranquilla*, *Bona & turbata*, *Mala & turbata*, *conscientia*.

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A good quiet conscience, and a bad quiet conscience; a good troubled conscience, and a bad troubled conscience.

1. A good quiet conscience is his, who hath a well grounded assurance of the free favour of God, and the full pardon of his sins in Jesus Christ; he that is in this case is half in heaven already, like the beloved Disciple, reposes himself in the bosom of Christ.

2. Would you think a bad conscience could be quiet? 'Tis the secure, slumbering, seared conscience, as St. Paul calls it, *Having their conscience seared with a hot iron*; a very significant Metaphor; taken from the dealing of a Chirurgeon with his Patient, who when he cuts off a limb, he benums, sears, cauterises it, to make it insensible; so the devil, when he designs to cut off and destroy a soul, to ruin a poor sinner, he cauterises his conscience, benums his soul, lulls him to sleep: Too many such we see settled on their lees, going on carelessly, fearlessly, presumptuously, in sinful and flagitious courses, crying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace, as if they had made a covenant with death and hell; like Solomon's drunkard, though wounded and stricken, yet feel it not.

3. A good troubled conscience is his, who works out his salvation with fear and

A good -
quiet con-
science.

A bad -
quiet con-
science.

1 Tim. 4.

2.

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Tranquil-
itas ista
tempestas
est. Hier-
rom.

Prov. 23.

35.

A good
troubled
consci-
ence.

Heb. 12.1
Rom. 7.23

and trembling, that unfeignedly believes in Christ, is sincerely humbled for sin, is severely watchful against sin; yet is dejected for want of assurance of God's love, and evidence of pardon, and for that sin hangs on him so fast, and the Law in his members wars against the Law of his mind, bringing him into captivity to the law of sin. Thus it hath been with the best of God's servants, *Job*, *David*, and many others, as they by sad complaints in times of desertion do testifie. And this state, though not so sweet, is yet as sound and good as his who hath a good quiet conscience, and 'tis usually more strict, watchful, and circumspect.

A bad
troubled
consci-
ence.

Prov. 18.
14.

4. A bad troubled conscience is that which accuseth, terrifieth, despaireth, after sin committed, and long continued in. When conscience is troubled, not without sense of sin, but takes indirect and unlawful courses for cure and comfort, flies from God, not to him, as *Saul* to the Witch, and *Judas* to the Halter; this is that wounded conscience which *Solomon* calls intollerable. Thus many that live securely, as if there were no hell; die desperately, as if there were no heaven; for commonly presumption ends in despair, the bad quiet ends (without God's great mercy) in the bad troubled conscience.

These being the several states of the conscience

conscience, it concerns us to see and know, in which of these we stand; and first, Is thy conscience quiet or troubled? if it be quiet, conclude it not presently good, for you see there is a bad quiet conscience as well as a good; if troubled, judge it not bad because troubled, for there is a good troubled conscience as well as a bad.

If thy conscience be quiet and good, know, thou hast been troubled and humbled under the sense of Gods wrath and sight of thy sins, there hath gone a storm before the calm; thou hast in this trouble of conscience fled unto God in Christ by faith, thou livest by faith, hast repented of thy sins past, art watchful against sin for time to come, and walkest in all conscientious and cheerful obedience to God's will, running the race of his commandments.

Signes of
a good
quiet con-
science.

But if thy sin have never been thy sorrow, if thou be a stranger to Christ, and to the life of faith, if thou livest and allowest thy self in any known sin, and thy conscience be quiet, 'tis a false peace, a carnal and dangerous security, and, as it is in some mortal diseases, the less sense the more danger.

Notes of
a bad
quiet con-
science.

If thy conscience be troubled, thou maist know whether it be good or bad thus: A good troubled conscience

Signes of
a good
troubled
consci-
ence.

Job 13. 15
and 1. 22.
and 2. 9,
10.

1. Cleaves close to the promises. So *Job*, in his greatest anguish and agony of conscience, resolves, though the Lord slay him, yet he will trust in him.

2. Walks close to the Precepts. So the same *Job*, in his greatest conflicts, and strongest temptations, could not be tempted to forsake his integrity.

3. Humbly begs and earnestly implores strength and comfort of God. So *David*, when he lay under the trouble of a great sin, *Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit.*

Ps. 51. 8.

4. Is very tender and watchful that it wound not it self by sin. So the same *David*, *I will take heed to my ways. I will keep my mouth with a bridle, that I sin not with my tongue.*

Ps. 39. 1.

5. It hangs on the Ministry of the Word, waits constantly on God's Ordinances, prays, hears, reads, uses no indirect means, but plies all sanctifi'd means for support and comfort, and no Physician to welcome in the most dangerous sickness of the body, as to him a faithful Interpreter, that one of a thousand that can shew him his righteousness, that can assure him that God is gracious to him, and

Job 33.
23, 24.

and will deliver him from going down into the pit, having found a ranfome for him.

But if the cause of thy trouble be more for thy trouble, for thy disquiet, and the fear of punishment, then for sin, and for the offence done to God; and if thy care be to be delivered onely from the trouble, terror, and disquiet, and not from the sin; and if, lastly, thou carest not what means thou usest, right or wrong, to be eased; thy case is sad, thy conscience is bad. O let us not be strangers to our own hearts open the book of conscience, see what you can read there.

Notes of a
bad trou-
bled con-
science.

I have hitherto spoken of conscience, I shall now speak to conscience, and I pray God I may speak home to yours and to mine own: and first, by way of Reprehension; 2 by way of Exhortation.

The Ap-
plication.
1. By Re-
proof.

1. For Reprehension. Who is there that makes St. Paul's exercise his practise? How can we sufficiently bewail the general neglect of conscience? The profits, pleasures, preferments of the world, these are the world's Trinity, their god, while conscience, which is indeed God's Deputy in the soul, is little regarded. Nay, how many make a mock of conscientiousness, thinking such more nice then wise? Who cannot swallow sin, or strain conscience, for the obtaining a benefit, or eschewing

See the
judgment
of the
Universi-
ty of Ox-
ford upon
the Cove-
nant and
Negative
Oath.
Eccles.
10. 7.

The Question of
y. present age

eschewing a danger ; the Oathes , Vows ,
Covenants , Engagements , so cross and
contrary one to another , some of them
so sinfully imposed , so rashly taken , so
wretchedly broken , do more then make it
appear , that never was so little regard to
truth , righteousness , justice , and con-
science. *Solomon* tells us , he *hath seen* ,
I am sure we have seen , *servants upon*
horses , and Princes walking as servants
upon the earth . That Prince , that Queen
and Mistress of all our actions , Con-
science , is made a slave to its servants , to
serve and comply with worldly interests .

It was wont to be the inquiry , *Num*
licet ? whethent be lawful ? now , *Num*
profit ? whether it be gainful ? we boggle
at nothing that may be beneficial : If *Na-*
both's Vineyard be convenient , it must be
had , though his blood be press'd out as
the first fruits of the Vintage . If *Herod*
have made a rash Oath , *John Baptist*
must lose his head , rather then he will lose
his credit . If *Mordecai* will not bow ,
Haman will make him break . 'Tis easie
to enlarge in complaints . If men did la-
bour for a good conscience towards God ,
there would not be that ignorance , unbe-
lief , profaneness , hypocrisie , and con-
tempt of God and godliness , that every
where abounds . If men did labour for a
good conscience towards men , there
would

would not be such a disobedience to Magistrates, such kicking against Government, Civil and Ecclesiastical, such biting and back-biting; such injustice, oppression, and uncharitableness. In a word, All Laws, Divine and Humane, would not, as they are, and have been, be trampled under foot.

Well, conscience may be seared, silenced, put off for a time; but it will speak, it will cry, it will roar, and flie in our faces, and, like a Lion, tear us in pieces. We may think conscience dumb, because we are deaf; we may stifle it in prosperity, but when adversity comes, when the evil day comes, when our dying day comes, then we shall hear it, and feel it with a witness: witness *Theodorick*, *Causinus* who being at Supper, imagin'd he saw in a Holy-Fish's head the visage of *Symmachus*, a Court-Nobleman, whom he had unjustly slain; with which imagination he conceived such terror, that he never after enjoyed one good hour, but pining away, soon ended his unfortunate days. Witness Cardinal *Crescentius*, the Pope's Vice-gerent in the Chapter of *Trent*, who after he had ^{Boys} written Letters unto *Rome* full of mis- ^{Possils,} chief against the Protestants and cause of Religion, had a sudden concept, that the Devil, in the likeness of a huge Dog, walked in his chamber, and couched under his

his table ; the which afrighted him so , as that notwithstanding the counsel and comfort both of friends and Physicians , he died a disconsolate death. However at present we may slight and stifle our consciences, yet the time will come when we shall confess , that (as one well saith) the best Physick is Temperance, the best Law is Patience, and the best Divinity a good Conscience.

Dr. Sanderson.

Exhortation.

2. For Exhortation. Let St. Paul's practise be our pattern, his exercise ours ; Let us always have an eye to our conscience, that we offend not God by sin and impiety, that we offend not our neighbour by scandal and injury. I might be infinite in Motives, I will name but four, and but name them, and I pray the Lord to set them home.

Motives to labour for a good conscience.

The first.

1. Remember , I beseech you, that you have a conscience, do not forget your conscience, as *Messala Corvinus* forgot his name. Remember, I say, that you have a conscience, that God hath placed within you a Witness, a Guide, and a Judge of all your actions, from whom nothing can be hid; and that conscience is God's faithful Intelligencer, which will take God's part against our very selves; though no eye of man see us, yet, *facti omnis habemus arbitrum quem nihil latet*, God hath imprinted, implanted a conscience in

in every man, which follows him as faithfully, and keeps to him as constantly, as ever *Ruth* did to *Naomi*, or *Elisha* to *Elia*. If we would do evil, we cannot shake it off, we cannot say, Tarry here behind, while I go yonder: no power can wholly stifle it, no force can annihilate it, no time can obliterate it, death it self cannot part us and it; that parts soul and body, but it cannot part the soul and conscience; it will go with us to Judgment, to Heaven or Hell.

2. Think upon the comfort of a good conscience, 'tis a heaven upon earth, a garden of delights, the field which the Lord hath blessed; 'tis a comfort in life, a comfort in death, a comfort when all other comforts fail us, at the day of judgment. The Heathen Poet could say, *Iustum ac tenacem propositi virum*—
A just and upright man is so fixed and resolved, that no Tyrant can terrifie him, no danger can shake or apall him. And the Heathen Emperor, in the conscience of the justice and uprightness of his Reign, that he remembred not to have done any thing why he should not live secure and without fear, though he should resign his Empire and live a private life. 'Tis reported of *Julius Drusus*, that his house standing too open to those that passed by, an Architect offered him for five Talents
to

2d. Motive.

Corceius
Nerva.

to help the inconvenience, and make his house more private. He answered, He would rather give him ten Talents to make it more open, that (saith he) all men may see how I live. O if Heathens, who had but a moral conscience, could be thus confident, what is a truly sanctifi'd and soundly pacifi'd conscience! It is, in a word, the best compurgator, and most constant comforter.

3d. Motive 3. Consider the torment and terror of an evil conscience, 'tis a very hell upon earth, and 'tis the very hell of hell, that worm of conscience that never dies. Conscience is the eye of the soul, and the eye of all parts is most tender, the lightest touch, the smallest mote or prick torments it: So conscience is most tender, the least sin doth grate and gall it. If we would know what a guilty conscience is, ask *Achitophel*, after he had rebelled and given counsel against his Master *David*; ask *Judas*, after he had betraid and sold his Master Christ; ask *Spira*, after he had been false to his Religion, preferring his profit and credit to his conscience; ask *Gardiner*, after he had caused *Ridley* and *Latimer* to be burnt for the Protestant Religion. How many, to escape the hands of a tormenting conscience, have hid violent hands upon themselves?

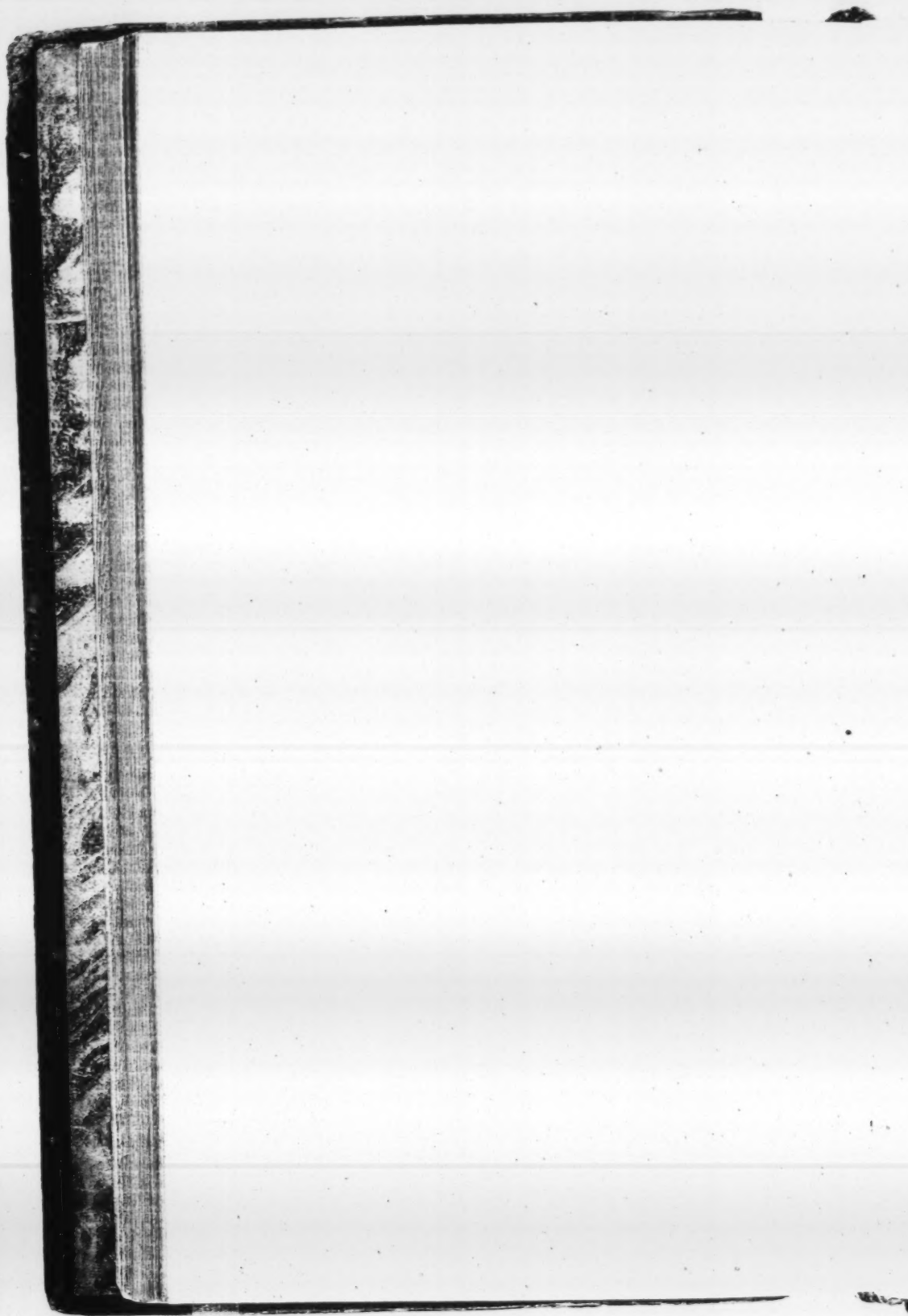
4th. Motive.

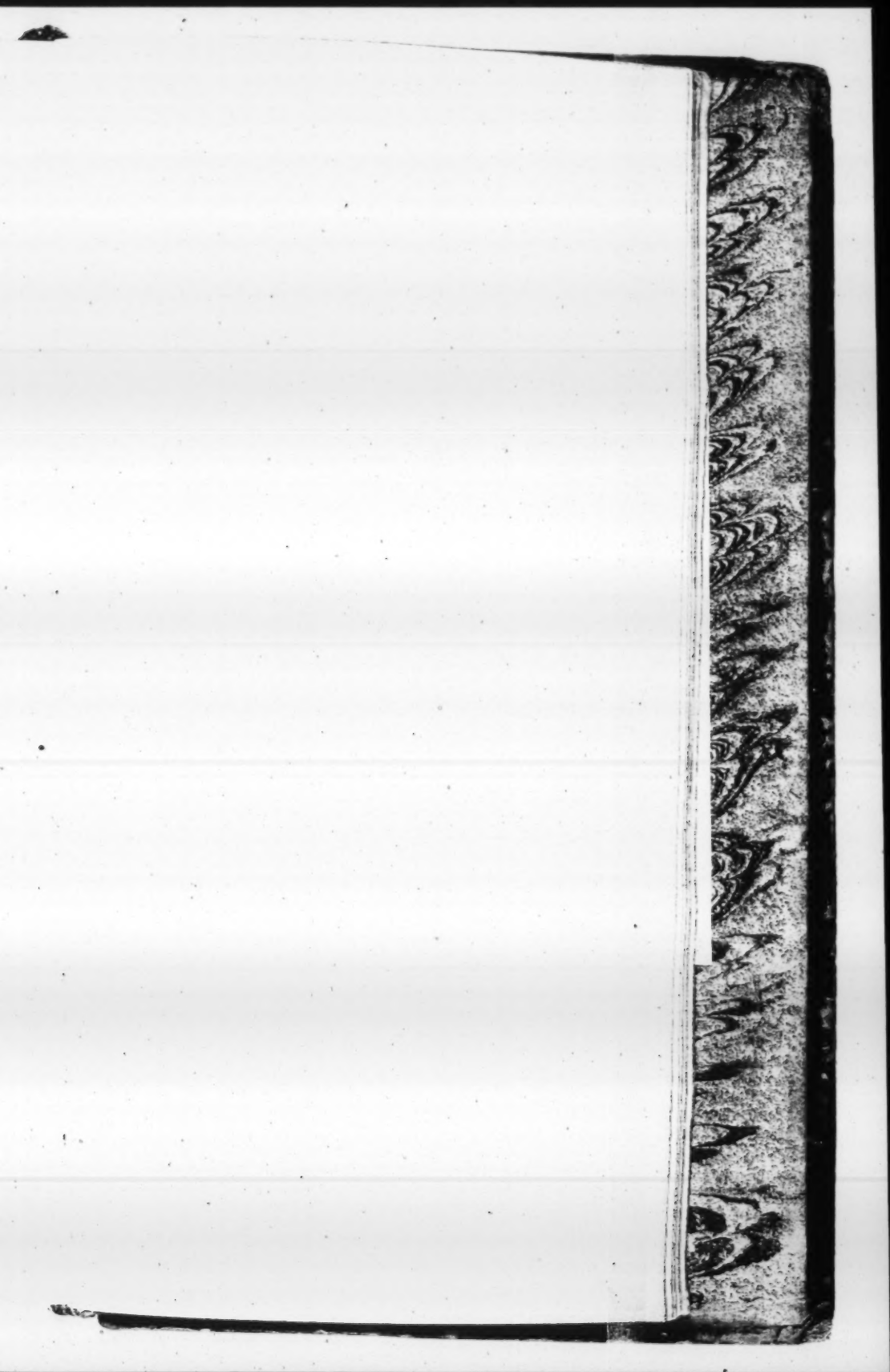
4. The last Motive borders upon the Text,

Text, the firm beliefe and frequent meditation of the Resurrection, that there shall be a Resurrection, at that Resurrection a Judgment, at that Judgment an Account, at that Account conscience shall be laid open; then, what hath been done in a corner, shall be seen as set on the house-top; we shall be made a spectacle ^{Psalm 50.} to God, Angels, and Men: Then shall ^{21.} all our sins be set in order before our eyes, and then a thousand worlds for a good conscience; then, wealth, honor, pleasure, will do us no pleasure; here conscience may slumber, there it will awake; here it may be silent, there it will speak, and will be a thousand witnesses for us or against us. Of all Motives to stir us up to get a good conscience, none so powerful as the serious consideration of the Resurrection, of the Judgment that follows the Resurrection, of the dreadful Account we must all give at that Judgment. And now I will end as I began, and conclude in the words of the Text, and I will joyn with them the Context, wishing we could all take so good an example, as hath in *St. Paul* been set before us, that we could so say, and so do; so believe, and so live, that you, and I, and all Christians, could say the Apostles faithful words, with the same faithful heart, and be ever able to witness this good confession, *After the*
way

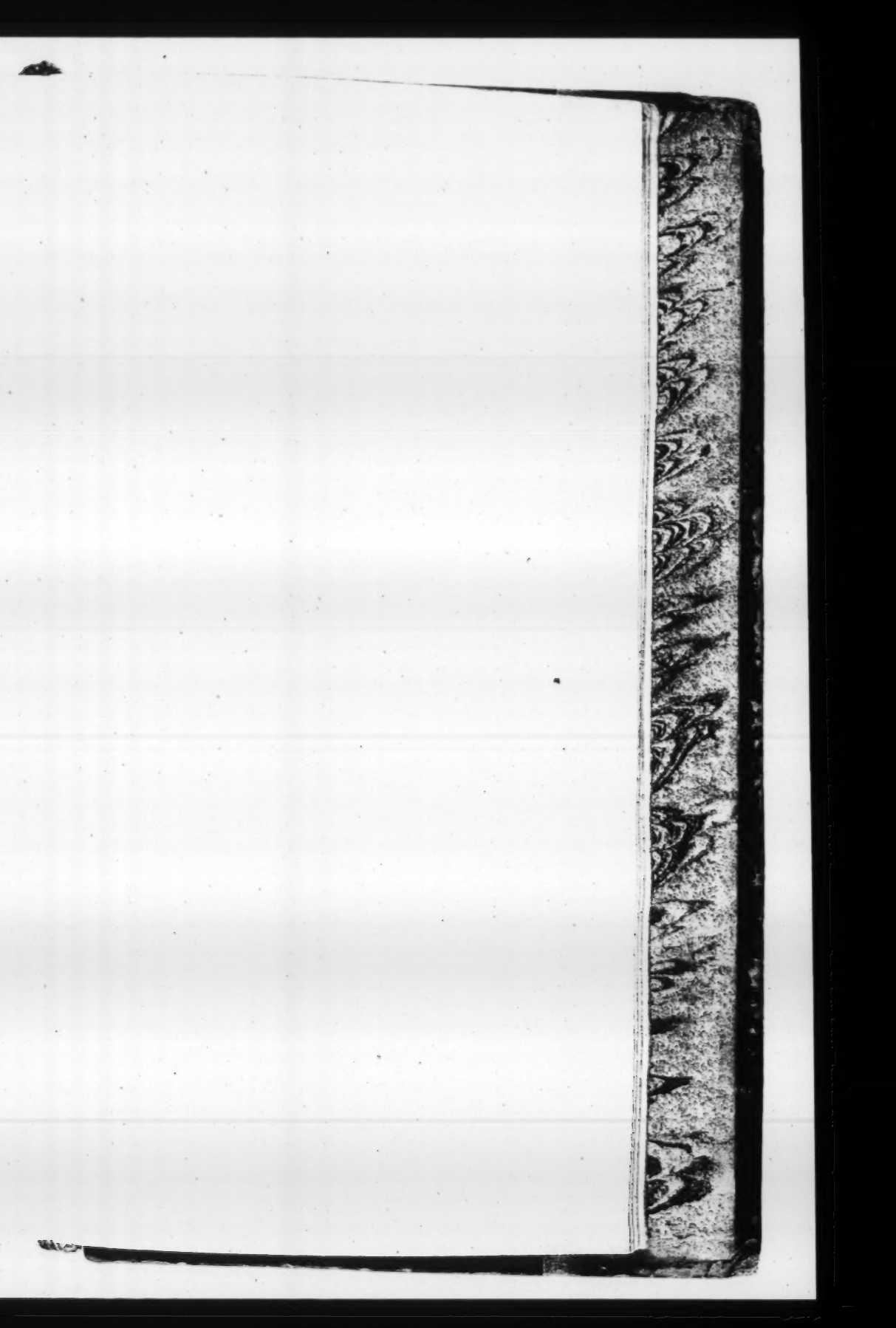
way which some call heresie, so worship we the God of our fathers, believing all things that are written in the Law and the Prophets, [in the Evangelists and the Apostles] and have hope towards God, that there shall be a Resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust. And herein do we exercise our selves, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards Man.

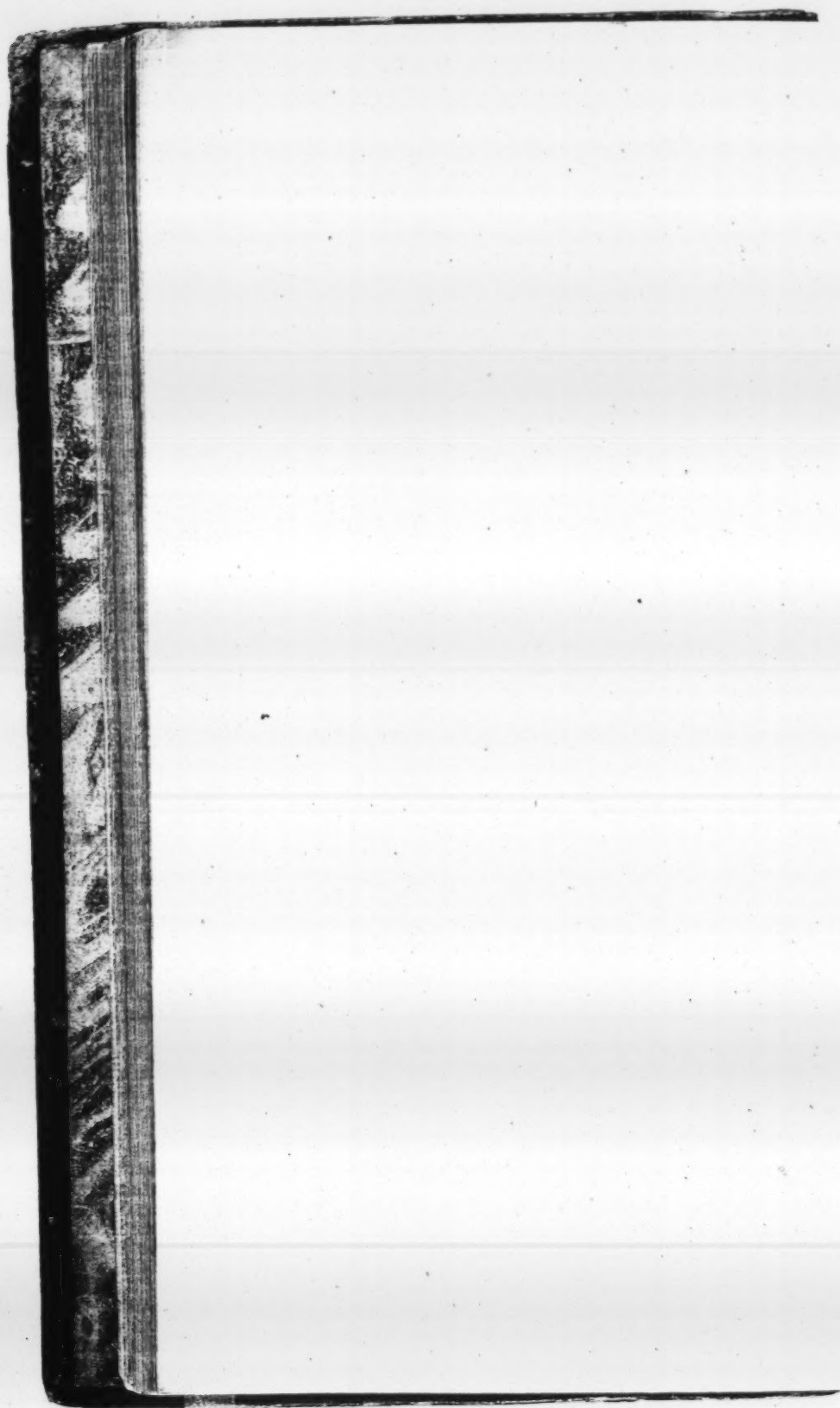
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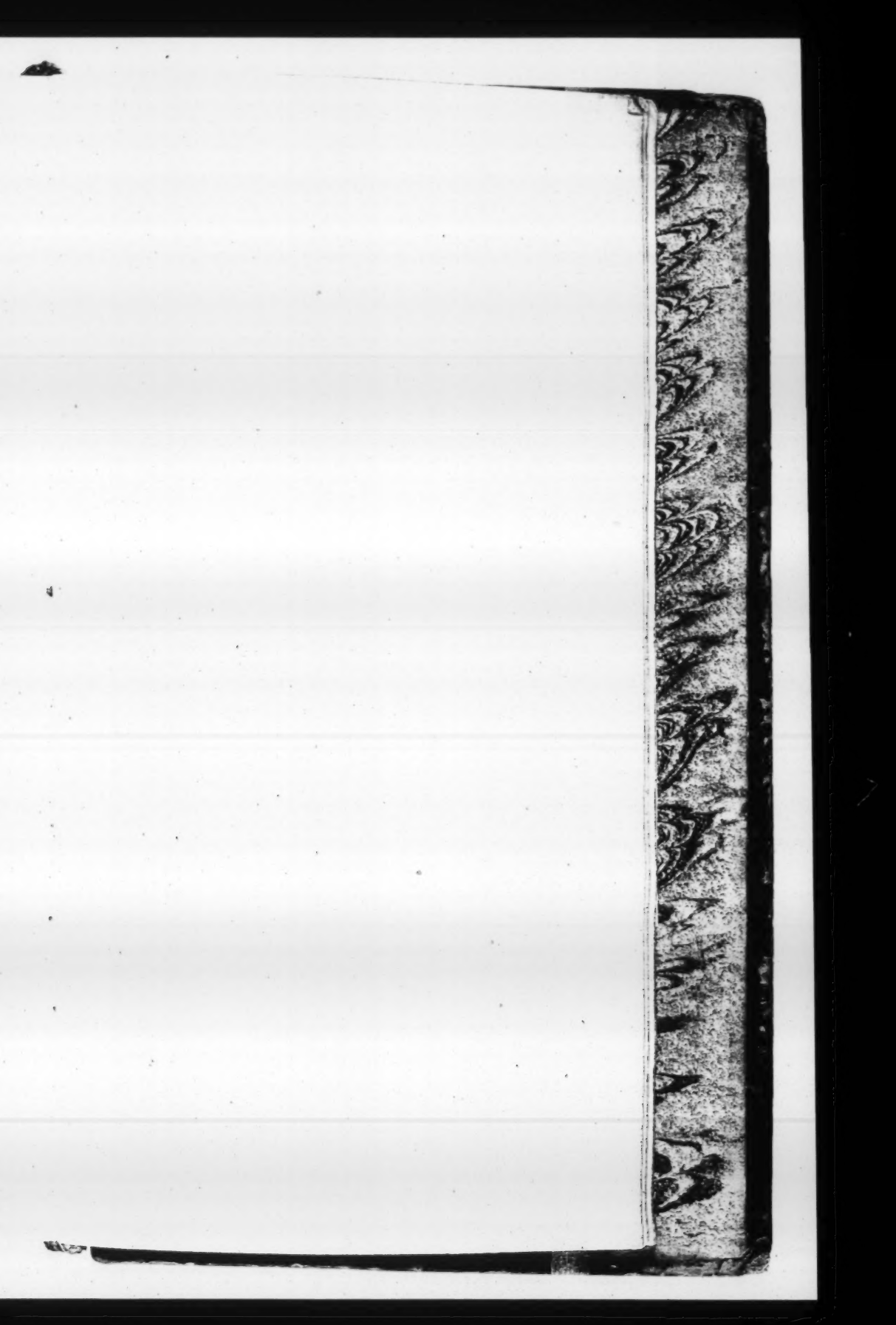


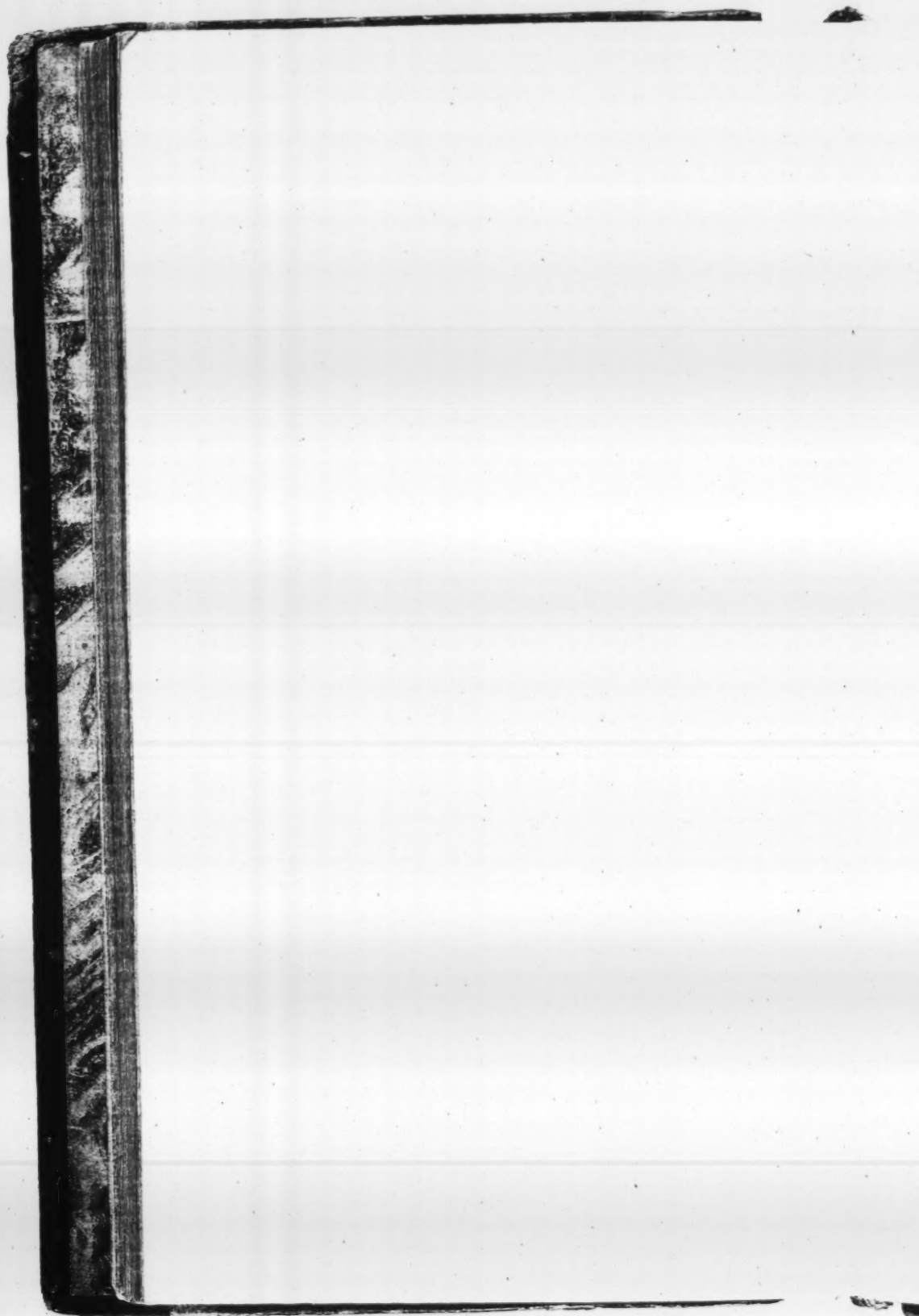


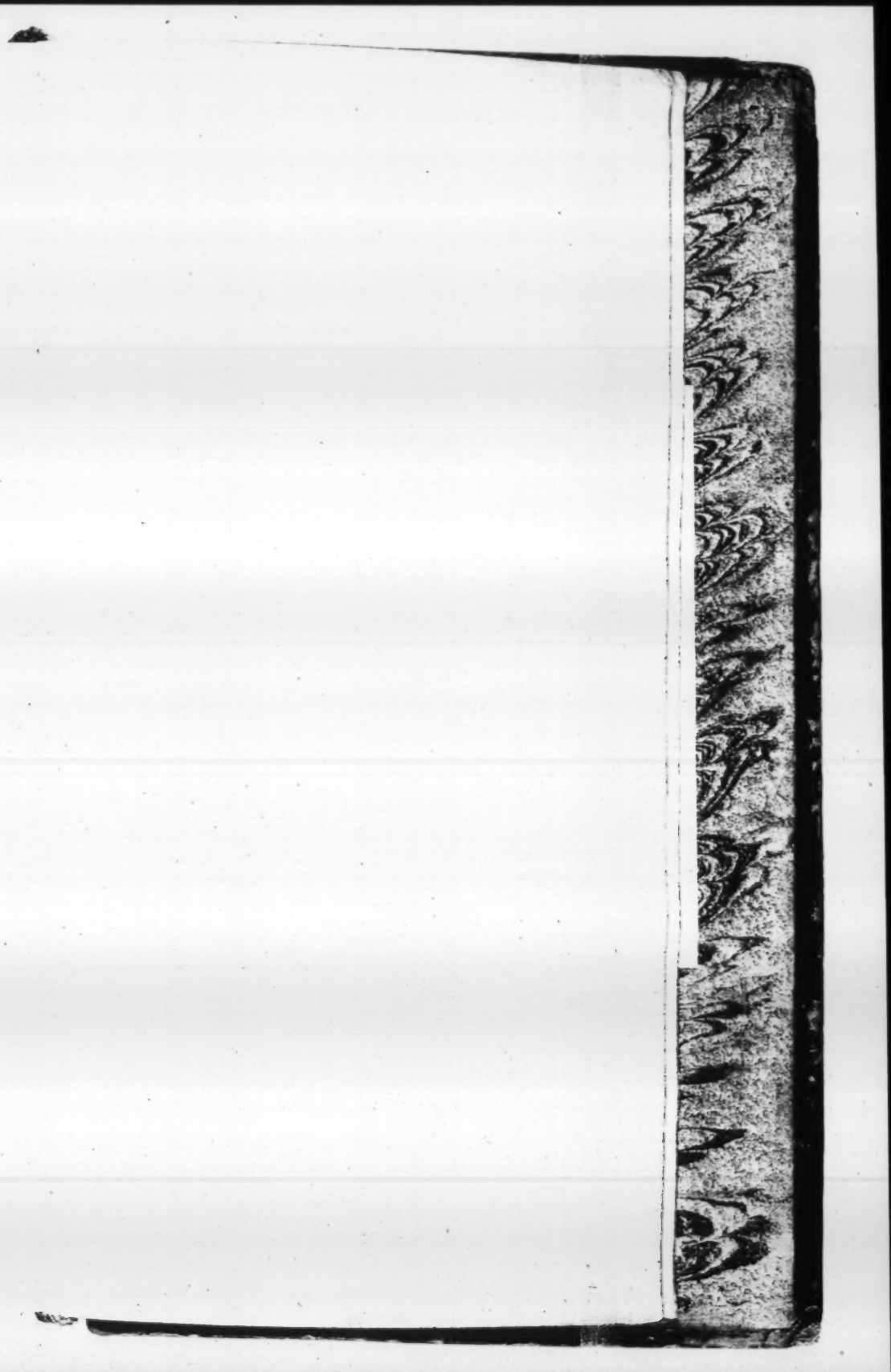






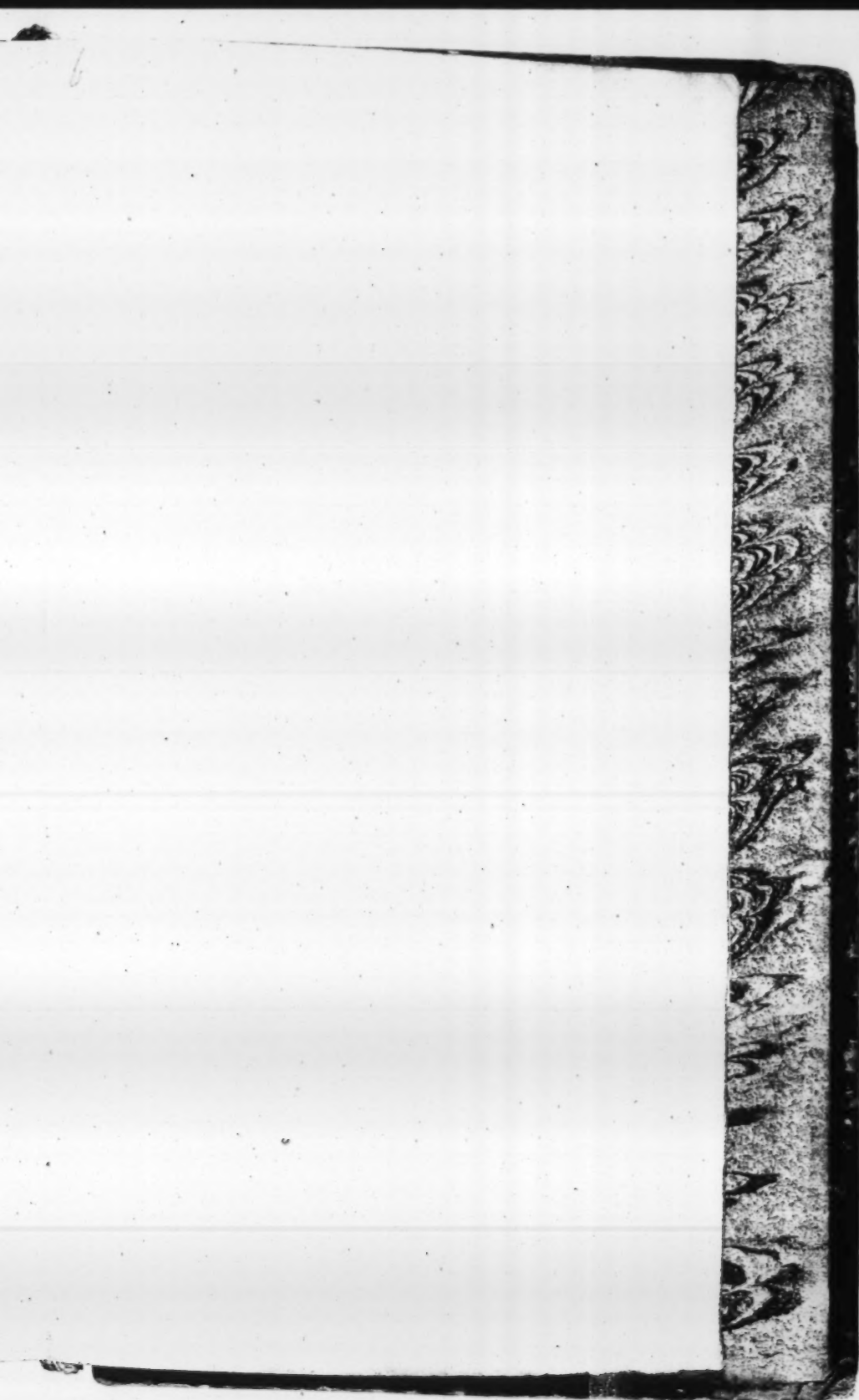


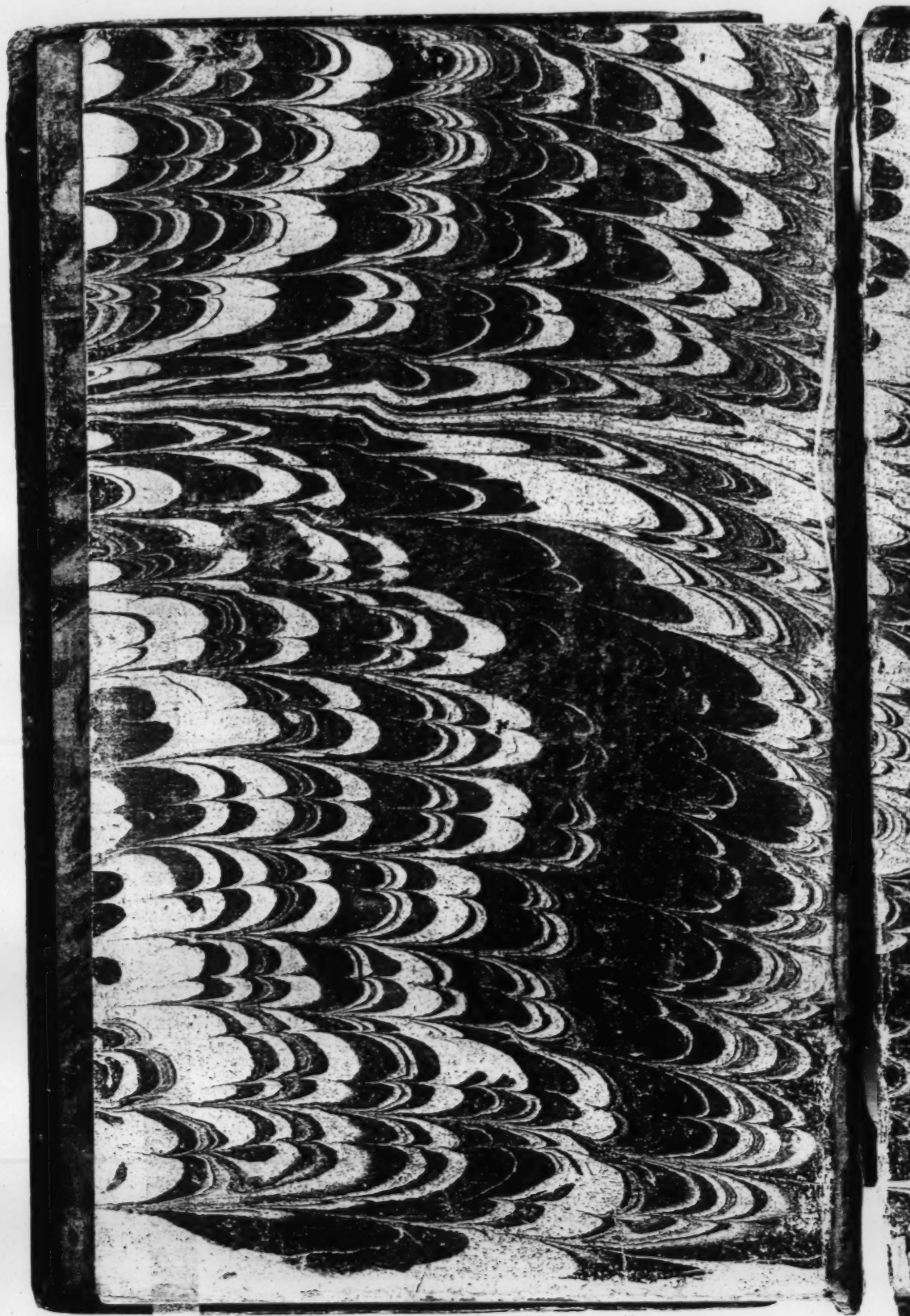




43.

6







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